

COMMON CAUSE

2 Summer
1978

15p

A MAGAZINE COVERING COMMUNITY AND INDUSTRIAL STRUGGLES
IN SOUTH WALES



**FORD comes to
Bridgend**

..ASDA SUPERSTORE...ABORTION...NF...HIRWAUN...NUCLEAR POWER...HOUSING AND THE LAW...NETWORK...YOUR DAI
STORE...ABORTION...NF...HIRWAUN...NUCLEAR POWER...HOUSING AND THE LAW...NETWORK...YOUR DAILY BREAD...FO
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HIRWAUN...NUCLEAR POWER...HOUSING AND THE LAW...NETWORK...YOUR DAILY BREAD...FORD...ASDA SUPERSTORE...

COMMON CAUSE

THE IDEA OF COMMON CAUSE IS TO LINK UP TRADE UNION STRUGGLES WITH COMMUNITY ACTION ISSUES - TO FORM A MAGAZINE WHICH CONCENTRATES ON ISSUES AFFECTING PEOPLE AT WORK AND AT HOME - AND TO TRY TO GET UNIONS AND COMMUNITY GROUPS TO RELATE THEIR PROBLEMS TO EACH OTHER.

WE WANT TO EXPLORE HOW DIFFERENT ISSUES CAN BE TACKLED AND HOW DIFFERENT GROUPS CAN HELP EACH OTHER. WE HOPE YOU READING THIS WILL TAKE COMMON CAUSE ALONG TO THE NEXT MEETING OF YOUR GROUP, WHATEVER GROUP THAT IS. WE WOULD FEEL THE MAGAZINE WAS A SUCCESS IF YOU FIND SOMETHING IN IT RELEVANT TO YOUR GROUP. IT WOULD BE BETTER STILL IF AN ARTICLE APPEARED IN THE NEXT ISSUE FROM YOUR GROUP.

PLEASE SEND IN IDEAS, ARTICLES, OR LETTERS, OR CONTACT US AND COME ALONG TO A MEETING. WE WOULD LIKE TO FIND MORE CONTACTS/HELPERS IN DIFFERENT PARTS OF THE AREA - FOR NOW, PLEASE GET IN TOUCH WITH:

Barbe- Cardiff 498117
Jeremy- Merthyr 6251.

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On 2 June 1978 the Welsh Office published the results of the House Condition Survey carried out in Wales during 1976. On the same day Alec Jones MP, Under-Secretary of State with responsibility for housing, made a speech to conference at Llandrindod Wells.

Spot the Difference...

“

Alec Jones:

"The latest figures show that there is a steady improvement in the overall condition of housing in Wales. As said in the Green Paper on Housing Policy, the main indications of the state of the country's housing are unfitness, the lack of one or more of the standard amenities, and disrepair. In the 1968 Survey, 32 per cent of our housing fell within these categories; by 1973 the figure had dropped to 25 per cent, and in 1976 it had fallen further to 18 per cent. This reflects the efforts of government, local authorities and individuals, and is a creditable performance."

”

“

House Condition Survey 1976,
p. 92:

"Even though detailed geographical comparisons with 1973 are not possible, the broad distribution of unfitness over Wales does not seem to have changed appreciably - this was certainly in line with expectation over a period so short compared with the life of a house. What was, however, out of line with expectation was the very large difference in absolute terms between the estimate of unfitness in 1973 and that in 1976. In 1973 the estimate was 147,000 and it is hardly conceivable that 47,000 houses were either demolished or made fit in a 3 year period.

A clue to the discrepancy is the number of dwellings classified as 'fit but out of repair' a category not used in 1973. This category contained 31,000 houses in 1976 and there is a strong suspicion that houses which would have been classified as unfit in 1973 were included here."

”

FORD

So Ford is coming to Bridgend. We beat off virtually every other European country for the prize. We won. But when you think about it, its an odd sort of victory. God knows we need the jobs. But are these really the only terms on which we can get them?

It is our money that is subsidising the factory, our sweat that will be turned into profits for the giant multi-national, our health that will suffer in the inevitable push to increase productivity. It is our money that will build the necessary



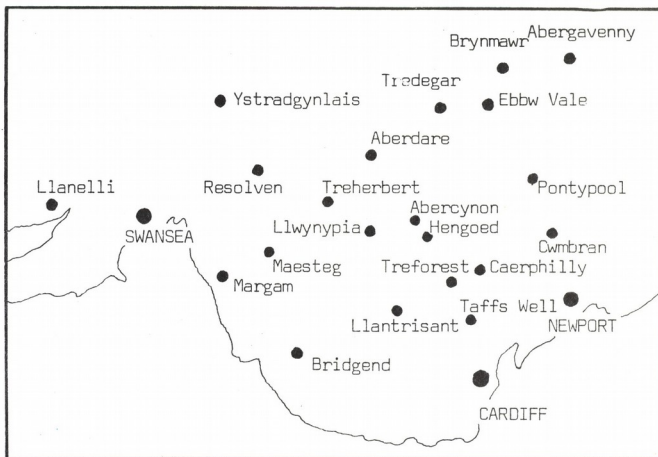
FACT ONE: Ford are attracted to South Wales because of low wages. Income in South Wales is the lowest in Britain, and Britain's wages are half those of some European countries - hardly a matter for celebration.

FACT TWO: Ford are attracted to South Wales because of high and increasing levels of unemployment. This is a deliberate policy which Ford adopts throughout the world. High unemployment is an effective way of keeping wages down - there is always someone ready to step into your shoes. It is also a well-tryed means of reducing the effectiveness of trades union organisations. All in all, hardly a matter for celebration.

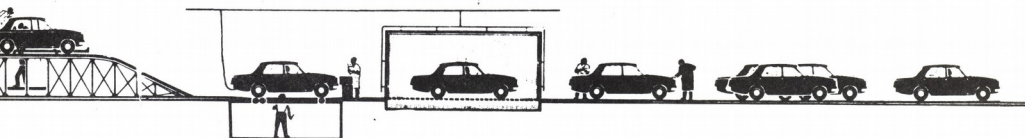
FACT THREE: Not all the jobs are new ones. Some have been created by closing down a section of the works at Dagenham. The better-paid jobs will be taken by existing workers who will be moving to South Wales. Not much to celebrate here.

FACT FOUR: Ford are attracted to South Wales by substantial Government grants estimated to account for £100 millions of the total £180 millions investment. It is our taxes, money that we desperately need for houses, schools and hospitals. Britain is well-known to be the most aggressive country in the international auctions for footlose

houses, roads, schools, hospitals and new railway line. It is us who will be made redundant if Ford pushes off - like others before them. And it is us who will also be made redundant if Ford stays and puts British Leyland out of business. We have seen such 'victories' before. Remember Port Talbot? It was to be a modern Eldorado; it was known as Treasure Island. We were led to expect wealth beyond the dreams of avarice. Have you seen Port Talbot recently? One of the largest and greyest council estates in Wales one of the most destructive urban motorways, one of the biggest white elephant shopping centres and one of the worst outbreaks of corruption. These are the prizes so far. So, before we get carried away too far by out good fortune, lets look at some of the facts.....



Above: Existing motor component plants in S.Wales -with the demise of coal the car industry is well on the way to becoming the second biggest in the region, after steel which itself is reliant upon it.



multi-national industry. As the Sunday Times points out, the trouble with this is that Britain overbids. This gives Ford a hidden subsidy which makes it easier for them to compete with British Leyland. But we are providing money for British Leyland too- If Ford helps put British Leyland out of business we not only lose untold millions of our taxes but most of the 25,000 car component jobs in South Wales that are linked to it. Hardly something to celebrate

FACT FIVE: None of the money for Bridgend is coming from the American parent company, yet a sizeable chunk of the profits will undoubtedly find its way back there. Fords stake comes from the profits made by workers in this country. Yet only a small percentage of the machinery has been ordered from British manufacturers. The rest is coming from European competitors. Not much to celebrate here either.

FACT SIX: Last year Ford made record profits in the U.K. This beat the previous record set the year before. In 1976, Ford profits in Britain were £121.6 millions before tax, £59.1 m after tax; but only £7 millions of tax was actually paid - the rest was what is known as "deferred", which is: just a nice way of saying it will never be paid. Not much to celebrate here.

FACT SEVEN: Working for Ford is no picnic. One Swansea worker was being watched by a squad of supervisors and foremen: "Get your finger out," they said, "Just remember there is a waiting list of 8000 people out there trying to get in." "Yes," said the worker, "and there are 2000 in here trying to get out." Still feel like celebrating?

FACT EIGHT: Before going to Swansea, Ford made a deal with local trades unionists that there would be no strikes for two years after the factory opened. Before Bridgend was announced, Henry Ford met Jack Jones. Perhaps they were celebrating?

FACT NINE: Ford were supposed to go to Llantrisant and not Bridgend. They changed their minds at the last minute. A minister was informed by civil servants on a wind-swept pier on the Thames. A new deal to tempt Ford had to be cobbled together on the spur of the moment because Llantrisant is a development area with higher grants than Bridgend. The grant limitations were quickly abandoned. A telegram was sent off. The minister went off on his boat trip to listen attentively to the case being put by London authorities for locating Ford in the declining Dockland area! Perhaps we should celebrate this wonderful way of running our country.



Swansea Ford workers occupy their factory.

FACT TEN: Everything about Ford proves we are still a million miles from controlling our own destinies. We are a million miles from controlling industrial investment. Until we do, we will not be able to plan our jobs together with our homes. Bridgend now has to tear up its plans and expand at a frantic pace. Meanwhile, places like the Rhondda and Ebbw Vale, and now Cardiff, can rot. We really are a million miles from having anything to celebrate.

ASDA

The £11m Superstore

YES, £11,260,000 WAS THE PROFIT (AFTER TAX) MADE BY THE MASSIVE ASSOCIATED DAIRIES GROUP, OWNERS OF ASDA SUPERSTORES. ASDA HAVE JUST OPENED THEIR LATEST 'SHOPPING SPECTACULAR' AT DOWLAIS TOP, MERTHYR TYDFIL, BUT ARE ALREADY WELL-KNOWN IN WALES FOR THEIR OTHER SHOPS AT ROGERSTONE AND WREXHAM.

The Political Levy in Your Shopping Basket.

Not only do you have the certainty of boosting the profits and power of this consumer giant when you shop there but you can be sure that you will be contributing to groups such as Aims for Freedom and Enterprise (£250 1976-7) and the West Yorkshire Industrialists' Council (£500 1976-7) not known to be in favour of trade unions as well as the CONSERVATIVE PARTY (£125 1976-7). This latter point will be of interest to shoppers in South Wales who are likely to vote Labour, or Plaid. So remember that each time you shop at Asda, whether you are Labour, Plaid Cymru or non-aligned, you will be helping the Tories.

Big Shops, Big Profits.

Asda reckon all their shops to be between 20,000 sq. ft. and 40,000 sq. ft., a vast aircraft hangar-like size to those of us used to corner shops or the local supermarket. Once inside, pushing your bigger than normal trolley you are bombarded by bamboozling, gibberish, jingles that are designed to lull you into a state of idiocy and reduce your resistance so that you buy everything you see. Luckily, most of us have more sense and less money, for this to actually happen. The way that ASDA and their public relations advisers (Scott Verner, Carl Byoir and Associates of Berkeley Square, London) sell themselves to local councils who have to give them planning permission to build is on two main claims:

DOWLAIS TOP

What is there here at Dowlais
Top to please a poet's eye?
What is there here but ragged
earth against a ragged sky,
A bleak discoloured broken land
where only the strayed
sheep cry?

So bleak and grim, a waste of
stone, rough grass, and
weed and slag,
And shabby Dowlais down below,
where live the sage and wag,
And miles around the great bare
hills, the land of Mog
and Mag!

And yet to here my heart returns
when softer landscapes cloy,
For here I sang my secret song,
my silent psalm of joy,
On the day I felt a poet born
within the dreaming boy.

For here I found the soul could
sing whate'er the eye
could see,
Could sing about the beauty yet
to be,
And probe to the impassioned
thought that is the root
of poetry.

IDRIS DAVIES (1951)



- FIRSTLY, that they sell at lower prices, so that they are better for the shopper; and SECONDLY, that they do NOT knock the stuffing out of existing shops because they offer a different and more convenient way of shopping.

Let's look at these two claims!

Low Prices? Our *Common Cause* researcher who did his weekly shopping at Asda to see what their prices looked like, did not find them as low as the Asda claims would suggest in their publicity. Like many supermarkets, they seemed to have some items at knock-down prices, balanced out by many more at normal prices.

Superstores v High Street Shops

When we look at Asda's claim ("Asda's experience ... is that thriving shopping centres do not suffer when a new superstore opens". Asda News Release, February 1975) more closely we

see that what they really mean is that shops who don't sell the same things as Asda will not be affected by one of their Superstore opening, but food shops and ordinary supermarkets will. ("Non-food retailing is continuing to expand and fill any gaps created by the closure of town centre food shops". "Asda News Release, February 1975).

But if Asda prices aren't much different from other shops and the growth of out-of-town Superstores is killing off town-centre shopping, why do people go to Superstores? The main answer is that they are new and that they are easy to use if you have a car. Because of the vast number of car-parking spaces provided (900 spaces at Rogerstone Asda) you can get in and out quickly without waiting or paying for parking. The growth of 36 Superstores have pushed Associated Dairies profits up from £654,000 in 1968 to £11,260,000 in 1977.

Common Cause expects to see jobs lost and shop closures in the town centres within driving distance of Dowlais Top, because of the opening of the new Superstore. Such closures will make shopping very much worse for people without cars. There is also the fear that if out-of-town Superstores and hypermarkets do get a big slice out of shopping trade by forcing competitors out of business, then they will be free to fix their prices as high as they like without competition.

To the old Dowlais as a shopping centre in its own right, Asda has come as the final nail in the coffin after the Council's redevelopment has demolished much of the area, reducing the 170 jobs in the service trades in the area 5-6 years ago years ago to just a handful now.



Common Cause would like to hear from shopworkers at Asda and other big stores, so that we can balance the public relations claims of these multi-million profit makers with some of the reality of behind the shop counter. In the future we would like to look at Tesco, Carrefour, Sainsbury etc., so whether you are in A.S.D.A.W., the T.G.W.U. or no union at all, please get in touch.

REMEMBER SHOPPING AT ASDA MEANS MONEY TO THE TORIES.

Ely Gingerbread Group

Ely Gingerbread Group exists for all single parent families in the Ely and surrounding area. Regular meetings are held on alternate Tuesday evenings, making good links with community organisations which provide practical help and advice to members. Meetings are held at the Old Peoples Day Centre, Grand Ave., Ely. New members are welcome to come along to any meeting, or contact Nigel Billingham on Cardiff 493387, or Yvonne Loughlin, Chairwoman Ely Gingerbread Group, 21 Llandow Road, Ely, Cardiff.

Young woman in the out-patient department of the Heath Hospital, having been refused a termination:

“I felt like I was being punished for getting pregnant”

WHEN THE NATIONAL HEALTH SERVICE WAS ORIGINALLY INTRODUCED IN 1948, IT WAS HAILED AS A GLORIOUS PIECE OF SOCIALIST PHILOSOPHY TRANSLATED INTO REALITY. A SERVICE TO PROVIDE EFFECTIVE HEALTH CARE FOR EVERYONE, RICH AND POOR ALIKE. WHAT A LONG WAY FROM THAT DREAM WE ARE TODAY!

But why has the Health Service failed so many people? I believe one of the reasons is common to many of the great institutions that control our lives: that the people who design and administer the Health Service have little, if any, real contact with the people who use the service most. Articulate middle class people who already get a good deal out of life usually get a good deal out of the NHS. People who are already deprived, however, are much more likely to get a bad deal.

One of the best examples of this I know is the abortion facilities 'offered' at the University Hospital of Wales in Cardiff. Under the Abortion Act of 1967, a woman may have her pregnancy terminated if any one of 4 criteria are fulfilled. These are a little complicated to describe in detail here, but the important point is this: the wording of the Act is so deliberately vague that in theory almost any woman would fulfill one of the criteria. In other words, all other things being equal, the decision to perform the abortion is at the doctor's discretion. And in Cardiff that discretion makes it very very difficult to get an abortion on the NHS.

This is hardly surprising really, because how can you expect consultants on £10,000 a year to understand in any depth the problems of, say, a single parent family in Splott? The abortion issue in Cardiff really revolves around class.

It's no skin off your nose if you get pregnant and you live in Cyncoed or Lisvane - you just pop up to Birmingham for the weekend and fork out your £70, but if you live in Adamsdown, if you're on a low fixed income or supplementary benefit, you're in real trouble. Don't be misled into thinking that this is due to a lack of facilities in South Glamorgan (and that's getting on for a million people) - it isn't. A report from the British Pregnancy Advisory Service in 1975 stated: "On the whole, Welsh women are more likely to obtain abortions on the NHS than English women, unless they live in Cardiff."

The differences between Cardiff and Swansea are so great that they cannot be accounted for in resource terms alone." This was confirmed by the Cardiff Women's Action Group in its evidence to the Royal Commission on the NHS in 1975. They showed that 154 women sought advice from the BPAS in Cardiff in 1975, compared with just 5 from Swansea.

If anything, the situation has deteriorated since then. A major survey of Cardiff G.P.'s in 1976 showed that the majority of them were dissatisfied with the service, and most of them are men!

Recently a new service was opened at the Heath Hospital - the provision for day-care terminations; that is to say, abortions carried out under local anaesthetic with the patient being discharged the same day. This new enterprise was warmly praised by the South Wales Echo recently but will it actually change anything? Alas, no. The director of the new unit, Mr. Geraint Williams, is one of the least lenient" of the Cardiff consultant gynaecologists, and it seems that the main reason the unit was opened was to ease some of the pressure on beds for women with gynaecological problems. The actual number of terminations is unlikely to change.

To be fair, there are a few "liberal" gynaecologists in South Glamorgan, but I remember one of them saying to me, "I can't do everyone else's abortions for them - I wouldn't be doing anything else."

I do not choose to discuss the morality of the abortion issue here. This is a matter that each individual must work out for him or herself. But surely we must fight a system that uses one rule for the rich and another for the poor.



What of the NF in South Wales?

Cardiff, with its weak trades union movement, has always been a stamping ground for fascists - from the National Fascist and the Imperial Fascist League in the late 1920's, to the Mosleyite British Union of Fascists (Blackshirts) in the 30's and the NF and British Movement in the late 60's and 70's. Workers in South Wales are no less susceptible to racist ideas and fascist practice than, say, the workers of Hoxton in the East End of London.

The fact that Thomas Moran of the New Party (the forerunner to the Blackshirts) polled 30% of the vote against Labour in Merthyr and that 6000 turned out for a Mosleyite meeting in Tonypany in the 1930's prove this.

However, to turn to more recent times - the late 60's - Cardiff was one of the strongest NF branches in the country. George Parsons - NF candidate against Callaghan at the next election - managed to poll 10% of the vote in the May 1969 council election in Cardiff. He managed a mere 1.9% in the following General Election.

Parsons is a bookie, secretary of the South Wales Bookmakers Federation, and a rabid anti-semitic. Before joining the NF he was expelled from the Liberal Party who he represented on Cardiff City Council. His "greatest" moment in the NF's eyes was when he organised a pro-South African Rugby team march in Cardiff. He is best described, leaving aside his fascist political views, as a political opportunist; he hopes to carve out a seat on the Nazi's National Directorate for himself.

After the demise of the local NF in the early 70's, I've-got-a-horse Parsons infiltrated the newly-formed (but now defunct)

Cardiff Ratepayers Association, along with other Front members. (The Risca Citizens Association is also under fascist control). The Ratepayers gave Parsons and Co. a resting place for a few years until they were forced out in November 1976, as they were becoming a liability. Incidentally, it was one of the Ratepayer's councillors, Clive Milsom, who recently declared his support for the NF's application to hire the City Hall Assembly Rooms for a public meeting.

Other NF Nazis include Stephen Newman from Dinas Powis, who in the space of 12 months went from chairman of the Barry Young Conservatives to organiser of the Wales Anti-Immigration League (an NF "front" organisation) and is now hon. sec. of the Cardiff NF branch. Their hack press officer is flying ace, hero, and garage owner Colin Gibbon. Gibbon is NF candidate for Cardiff West - George Thomas's seat - and in the past stood against Eric Heffer in Liverpool, polling a miserable few hundred votes.

What of the NF's strength in South Wales? They claim to have branches in Cardiff, Barry, Pontypridd, Newport, Bridgend, and Carmarthen. An estimate of their numbers would put it at no more than 50 - and a paper membership at that.

Their activity to date has been minimal. Apart from leafletting and holding meetings under the title of the British Vegetarian Society, their activities have included carving various crudities on toilet doors and fixing stickers aimed at pensioners in the Cardiff University Students Union. Obviously, they are waiting for the opportunity to operate openly.

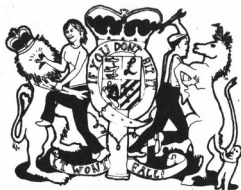
The Cardiff City Council bye-election in Ely - held on Thurs-

day, 27th. April - saw the emergence of NF candidate Claire McAllister - with a miserable 91 votes! This bye-election was used as a dummy-run for a general election campaign. It gave local anti-Nazis the opportunity to neutralise the NF, to build a massive anti-Nazi movement.

The NF are standing on a "law'n order" platform, which is rather like Mary Whitehouse campaigning around the slogan: "necrophilia on demand - a corpse's right to choose"! The Front demand: "Get tough with criminal thugs - stamp out thuggery and gangsterism."

Yet it is the National Front which is the party of the thug. In 1976, Front member Richard Craven was sentenced to 6 years in jail, and NF member Thomas McMahon received 7 years, for possessing guns and explosives for use against 'wog premises.' Martin Webster, the NF's Organiser, has been jailed for physical assault. John Tyndall, Front Chairman, was jailed twice for building a private army, possessing offensive weapons, and for threatening behaviour.

19-year-old Tony Sutton received a suspended sentence after attacking a black man and his three children. Sutton's defence was that he had just left an NF meeting and had felt compelled to 'get the blacks.' The National Front's Wandsworth organiser, Fred Hampton, told the News of the World: "We've got some really vicious bastards I'd never cross a couple of them. They're not very tall and they are violent and vicious because they have a complex about being small. My branch is the biggest gang of thugs in London. We've got safebreakers; we've got one who's done 18 months for nicking new cars. I've got some burglars and I think there's even a couple of cases of armed robbery."



Often, it is not necessary for the NF to commit acts of violence against black immigrants. Their very presence creates a violent scenario. Any NF activity in an area, any march, meeting, or paper sale, has one inevitable result. The black, brown and yellow people in the area feel less safe - they are the ones afraid to go out at night and it is their children who are discriminated against by other kids at school. Freedom of speech to Nazis amounts to no more than a denial of the freedom of blacks, of jews, of socialists and trades unionists not to be subjected to racist abuse and fascist violence.

To conclude, what is the job in hand for anti-racists and anti-Nazis in South Wales? Firstly, the NF must be met with total, active opposition wherever and whenever they appear. They were met with such opposition at the Ely bye-election, and consequently got such little support from the voters that they will think again before emerging from the gutter. Secondly, it is only the working people who can stop the growth of the Nazis. We must not fall into the trap of relying on the police, the courts, or any other section of the State. Race Relations Acts will not stop the NF - they were never meant to! Judge McKinnon's remarks to John Kingsley Read, and Manchester Chief Constable Anderton secret deal with the NF at Hyde and elsewhere, serve only to highlight the fact that it is our job and ours alone,

To this end, a Cardiff Anti-Nazi League has been formed, opposing Britain's new Nazis at Ely and wherever else they show their fascist face. We must not forget that the politics of the National Front are the politics of fear and desperation. Theirs are the politics of the gutter and ultimately of the gas chamber.

Terry James.
Cardiff Anti-Nazi League.

Cardiff Anti-Nazi League
c/o Union Books,
58, Bridge Street,
Cardiff. Tel.399556.

Cardiff
Welsh Committee Against Racism
secretary: John Davies.
17, Sunny Bank,
Machen, Gwent.
Tel. Machen 650.

Claimants & Workers Unite

With the revival of Cardiff Claimants Union, there are now two in South Wales - Cardiff and Swansea.

They have been formed out of a need to do something about grievances under the social security system. C.U.'s have been set up (and are controlled) by claimants and ex-claimants, to represent members at social security offices and at appeals, and to work through the National Federation of Claimants Unions for radical changes in the Welfare State. The Claimants Movement has attempted to fill the gap in trades union activity towards the unemployed. Like a trade union, the Claimants Union supports certain objectives - for example the right to an adequate income without means test for all people - and each group holds regular meetings open to all claimants.

The vast majority of redundant workers may not remain in a trades union (the TGWU being a notable exception) and, in the absence of a minimum wage, many workers and their dependants also receive social security. Thus, claimants groups see links with the trades union movement, on issues such as unemployment and discrimination against women, as important. This is not without problems for t.u. branches that are especially concerned with workplace representation, and at present only 3 trades councils have Claimants Union delegates. However, we are still waiting for trade union leaders to follow up their expressions of concern about unemployment with concrete support for claimants.

For further information and claimant support, contact:

*Cardiff C.U. One-O-Eight Bookshop
108, Salisbury Rd., Cathays,
Cardiff. T.28908.*

*Swansea C.U. 79, Brookesby Rd.,
Bon-y-Maen, Swansea.*

Heart Drug Scandal

THE ICI HEART DRUG "ERALDRIN" HAS PRODUCED THE GREATEST SCANDAL SINCE THALIDOMIDE. THOUSANDS OF PEOPLE THROUGHOUT THE COUNTRY HAVE SUFFERED PERMANENT DAMAGE AFTER TAKING THIS DRUG FOR ANGINA AND OTHER HEART COMPLAINTS. PATIENTS HAVE SUFFERED SERIOUS SIDE EFFECTS RANGING FROM IMPAIRMENT OF VISION AND HEARING TO SCLEROSING PERITONITIS (A SEVERE CONDITION OF THE INTESTINES, WHICH HAS CAUSED THE DEATH OF SEVERAL PATIENTS).

ICI, the drug manufacturers, have accepted a moral, but not legal, responsibility and have set up a Voluntary Compensation Scheme. However, this scheme is far from adequate. Patients appear to receive varying amounts, which are totally unrelated to the severity of their conditions. In addition, ICI only accept certain side effects as having been caused by "Eraldin".

Community Health Councils throughout Britain have initiated surveys in order to identify the number of Eraldin victims and to supply evidence as to the side effects they have suffered.

Already, as a result of the surveys carried out in many Health districts, it has become apparent that patients are suffering from more side effects than those recognised by ICI.

Patients throughout the country, in co-operation with their CHCs, have set up Eraldin Patients Action Groups in order to co-ordinate their efforts and make a joint approach to the Government to press for an inquiry into the drug. These groups are also appointing Regional Solicitors to act on their behalf regarding the compensation claims, pressing for recognition, research and treatment of the side effects, and urging the Committee on the Safety of Medicines to review the whole system regarding the safety and monitoring of drugs, so that this tragedy cannot occur again.

Anyone who has taken "Eraldin" and has suffered side effects as a result should write to their local Community Health Council or get in touch with Thea James, (Secretary EPAC in Wales) at 3 Garth Villas, Merthyr Tydfil.

P.S. ICI PROFITS FOR 1977 WERE 2500 MILLION APPROX.

HIRWAUN...A STRUGGLE

WE ARE NO STRANGERS TO STRUGGLE IN SOUTH WALES. WITH 200 YEARS OF INDUSTRIALISATION AND EXPLOITATION UNDER OUR BELTS, WE KNOW ABOUT THESE THINGS. WE KNOW AS A FACT OF LIFE THAT NO IMPROVEMENT IN WORKING AND LIVING CONDITIONS HAVE BEEN HANDED WILLINGLY TO US BY EMPLOYERS OR GOVERNMENT, WITHOUT ORGANISED PRESSURE FROM WORKERS. EVEN THOUGH WE HAVE THIS LONG TRADITION THERE HAS BEEN NOTHING QUITE LIKE HIRWAUN BEFORE. THE CAMPAIGN AGAINST THE GAS TANKS IS A STRUGGLE WITH A DIFFERENCE.

Community Groups and Trade Unions joined forces.

It is different because a community group and trade unions joined forces. It is different too because the issue involved was not one in which trade union have traditionally involved themselves. Recent joint campaigns on public expenditure cuts have been as much concerned with protecting workers jobs as with safeguarding services for the community. This dual-purpose was in mind when community groups and busmen joined together in Leeds a few months ago. First they delayed fare increases and then succeeded in getting the proposed increase reduced. In Hirwaun, it was life itself rather than employment that was threatened.

Perhaps the closest parallel is the famous Clydeside rent strike and one-day industrial stoppage during the First World War. Landlords were trying to take advantage of the housing shortage to raise rents. In this case joint action obliged the government to introduce rent controls which have remained with us in one form or another ever since.

The lessons are clear.

But Hirwaun stands apart and is assured of a place in history. Here, a joint campaign was mounted to defeat a plan that threatened a whole community. The artificial and meaningless distinction between the interests of workers at work and at home, between trade union action and community action, were swept aside in a stirring struggle.



Hirwaun is a classic model of what can be achieved if we work together. The lessons are clear. They are exciting and inspirational. They symbolise more than any other struggle in any other part of Britain what 'Common Cause' is all about.

They were no ordinary tanks that Wales Gas proposed for Hirwaun. American research demonstrates that there could be a holocaust if there was a leak. If one of these containers holding 20,000 tons of liquid gas fractured, the contents would lie over the ground for a while. On gaining warmth from the earth, the gas would rise and disperse over a 4 mile area. Ignition could take place at the edge. The contents from one tank would be enough to engulf a medium-sized town in a fireball.

These findings weren't unearthed until the campaign was well under way. Although it was the local Labour Party that organised the first public meeting, it was not until all legal safeguards had been exhausted that the trade union movement became involved. At first the campaign was a conventional but well organised community-based one which pinned its faith in persuading an inspector at a public inquiry that the scheme should not go ahead at Hirwaun. Once the inquiry was inevitably lost, the only alternative was to prevent the construction work from taking place.

It is here that the trade union movement entered the scene and changed the complexion of the struggle. It was trade union organisation, solidarity and picketing that finally won the day. But this brief description makes it all sound deceptively simple. The Hirwaun campaigners had to learn as they went on. We are lucky. We can learn from Hirwaun.

The first thing they had to learn was that public inquiries are a farce. They are a clever device which gives ordinary people the illusion of a safeguard, that their case will receive an impartial hearing. Many groups have been confused by all the legalistic fog that surrounds inquiries. They have put all their eggs into this basket and have collapsed when the result came out against them months later. Fortunately Hirwaun were made of sterner stuff.

Public Inquiries - a clever device.

Nevertheless, the campaign put all its early efforts into the public inquiry. Rumours about the tanks had started in 1971. As usual, even the simplest information was hard to come by. It was before local government reorganisation. Aberdare - the main council covering Hirwaun - knew nothing. The plans turned out to be with Neath Rural, which had the smallest stake and least interest in the village. Aberdare were none too keen when they finally tracked down the application. Local Labour councillors organised a public meeting in November. An impressive 500-600 people turned out, and continued to turn out during the long campaign. An action committee of 20 was elected, who were to be responsible to the public meeting. The committee included a teacher, business executive, housewives, policeman, chemist and miners. Councillors were not elected at this stage and the Labour Party sensibly decided to stay in the background.

The committee started to prepare for the inquiry. To spread the word they organised a car cavalcade in Aberdare, a march on the Welsh Office, and a petition. Social functions

WITH A DIFFERENCE...

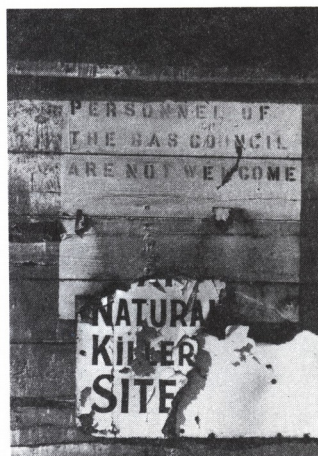
were arranged not so much to raise money but to bring people together. Speakers from the committee visited every club in the area to give a 5 minute talk on what was happening.

The inquiry lasted 20 days. The Gas Board employed 12 expert witnesses and a Q.C., Sir Patrick Maloney. They were reported to have spent £33,000 in presenting their case. Residents were left feeling justice could be bought. But they also left with an even greater solidarity. Maloney shouted at committee members giving evidence, "Treating us like criminals" said one of the group. The inspector made no attempt to curb Maloney's aggressive rudeness. The campaign found difficulty in getting expert witnesses because virtually all gas engineers are employed by British Gas. They found also they were only allowed to argue where the tanks should be sited - not whether they were needed in the first place.

No alternative to civil disobedience.

After the usual long delay from February 1972 the decision was finally made by the Welsh Office to give Wales Gas the go-ahead. Now Trades Councils and trade unions were approached for the first time. But because the action group simply asked for support they got resolutions but no action. A large public meeting decided that there was no alternative to civil disobedience now that legal safeguards had failed - whereupon the policeman on the committee resigned.

The next thing the committee had to learn was how to take direct action that would be effective. The committee were still not clear what form the civil disobedience should take. They went back to Aberdare Trades Council who had offered support to seek its advice. The Trades Council suggested picketing. Yet it was doubtful whether this would have worked but for the fact that Aberdare Trades Council was well organised and very active. It meant they had excellent contacts in the local labour movement and it meant that they had credibility.



Picketing started and became organised.

Wales Gas entered the site on 13 June 1973 and picketing started. It was the beginning of the holiday season and at first the pickets only drew members from the village and Aberdare Trades Council. It was not strong enough. Early on there were brushes with the police. Complaints were made to local MPs and the Glamorgan Watch Committee. A Superintendent and 3 sergeants were transferred from the Aberdare Station shortly after. A coincidence?

Soon the picket was more organised. The joint lodges of the Mountain Ash NUM agreed to take a picket from a different lodge every day for 2 weeks. Shop stewards and convenors at factories on the nearby industrial estate were approached. Shop floor meetings promised to provide 10 per cent of the labour force, to be called out at a moments notice when needed. Pirelli and Cambrian Castings in Aberdare agreed to picket. Drivers arriving were asked if they were trade unionists and were told the site was blacked - 75 per cent refused to enter. When hardcore was moved to the site the action committee went directly to the works and succeeded in getting supplies blacked. But although work was being severely disrupted it was making slow progress. In August 1973 Pirelli Cable workers at Aberdare told the committee they would wait no longer. They came out on

strike for a day the next Friday. The whole workforce, minus one or two, met at the village and formed a picket with local residents.

It was the last day anyone worked on the site

The last serious attempt to enter the site was made in March 1974. The small standby picket quickly mobilised the village and the industrial estate. Soon there were 2000-3000 people blocking the entrance. The heads of the valley road was closed completely from 10.30am to midday.

Wales Gas then turned its attention to Dynevor Arms. Yet they have never said they have given up on Hirwaun. Today there's still a token picket at the entrance ready to mobilise support if required.

Hirwaun got support from the Welsh Labour Party and TUC. But now the Wales TUC have instructed its membership not to block Dynevor Arms. It looks as if they, like the local press, fell for the propaganda put out by the London public relations organisation employed by the gas board. Towards the end this publicity was arguing that the lack of gas supplies was losing jobs. The action committee eventually got a short list from the gas board of firms supposedly making these claims. They went to talk to trade unionists at the works and found in each case the threat to jobs was a figment of the public relation outfit's imagination. So desperate are we now for jobs that we are under enormous pressure to accept anything under any conditions.

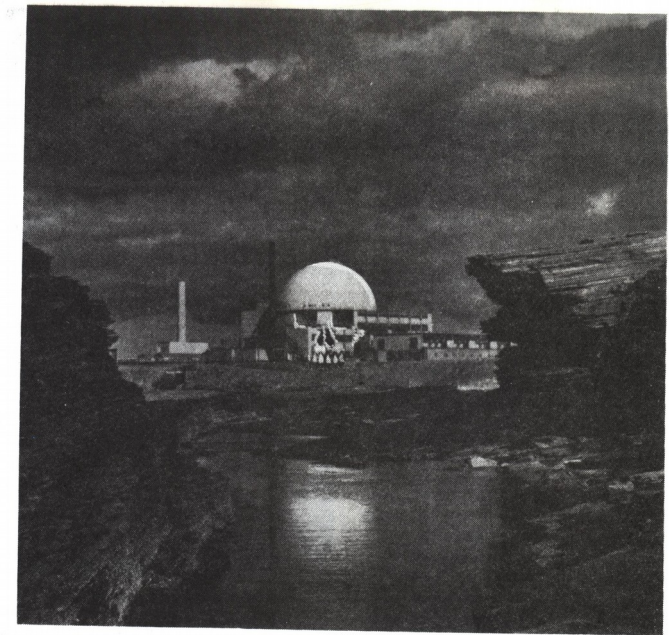
Hirwaun shows us we can win.

Hirwaun shows us we have no need to be desperate. It shows us we can control our destinies if we choose. If we join together we can make South Wales a fine place in which to live a fine life. This struggle with a difference could make South Wales a place with a difference. To achieve this we will have to learn from our defensive battles how we should next go on the offensive. It is well past the time. Hirwaun shows us we can win. So what is stopping us?

Photo: Cardiff Community Graphics

NO to Nuclear Power in Gwent

An application by the Central Electricity Generating Board (CEGB) for renewal of planning permission for a nuclear power station at Portskewett has attracted strong opposition from local people and environmentalists. With the Planning Committee of Gwent County Council due to consider the proposals, opponents are asking if their objections will be disregarded by local councillors.



Planning permission for the Portskewett site to be developed for an Advanced Gas-Cooled Reactor (AGR) type power station was granted, after a short inquiry, in 1972. There were several objections, including one from the Parish Council on the grounds of safety and loss of amenity. But opposition to the power station was steam-rollered by the combined weight of the County Council and the CEGB.

With no development of the site in the last 5 years, and the UK nuclear power programme in disarray, the CEGB has been forced to seek planning permission in order to prepare for construction in the early 1980's. Their application, which is similar to that approved in 1972, coincides with a Government decision to approve the early construction of nuclear power stations of the same type at Heysham near Lancaster and at Torness in Scotland. Portskewett is only one of a

number of sites earmarked for nuclear stations which the CEGB have obtained by compulsory purchase. In effect, they have set up a 'bank' of potential sites, anticipating that some local communities will be unprepared when the bulldozers move in. The reaction of the County Council has been to delay a decision on the CEGB application until all interested parties have been consulted. At public meetings arranged by the Council and by Portskewett Community Council, where the CEGB were asked to explain their plans, local residents were unanimous in their opposition. They have since formed an Action Committee to fight the construction of a nuclear power station at Portskewett.

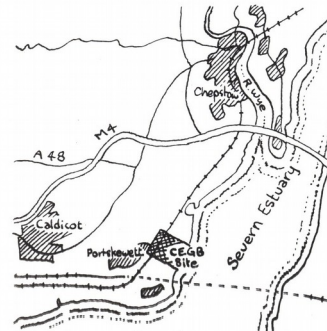
The Nuclear Option....

The AGR has an extremely poor record for delays and cost overruns during construction, and consequently only two of the five stations in the last nuclear programme have been commissioned. Both of these, at Hinckley Point in Somerset and at Hunterston near Glasgow, have had problems, and there has been absolutely no period of incident-free operation.

Cheap Energy Myth

The CEGB's claim that Portskewett can provide cheap energy is a myth. The Board has used current costs for nuclear electricity - from nuclear stations

of a different type that were built in the early 1960's - to justify the preference for nuclear power over other energy sources. Yet it has stated that no more generating capacity should be ordered; it is for this reason that the Government has agreed to pay the CEGB interest charges on the construction of Drax B coal-fired power station in Yorkshire, with the intention of preventing redundancies in the power plant industry. However, it appears that an exception is to be made for nuclear power stations. Nor does the claim that Portskewett would provide jobs stand up to scrutiny. The station would, if built, speed the closure of other power stations in the area such as Uskmouth, Newport, causing a net loss of power workers jobs. Many of the technicians and skilled plant operators would in any case be transferred from other nuclear plants, leaving 200 unskilled and clerical workers to be recruited locally. Energy options are being closed by the decision to build a nuclear power station. There was strong support at the Community Council public meeting for a tidal barrage on the Severn Estuary, to secure a renewable energy source. With the replacement of coal for electricity generation, many people believe the prospects for coal mining in South Wales are bleak. The demand for coal can only be maintained if the CEGB invests in new coal-burning technologies.



Opposition to Portskewett

The opposition to Portskewett is wideranging, from concern for local amenities to national energy and industrial policies. Despite the efforts of the CEEBs public relations men, local residents are not prepared to accept the assurances of nuclear experts on the safety and security of the plant. Their distrust of the commercial interests behind the proposals was heightened when people invited to a meeting between the Community Council and the CEEB and Gwent's Planning Officer were prevented from speaking. Uppermost in the minds of local people is the danger of radioactive contamination.

Friends of the Earth groups around Severnside have produced a written objection to the planning application* They, and the Conservation Society, believe it is wrong to go ahead with a nuclear power programme, as the country has not developed national energy policies based on available energy resources and community needs, and they question the need for more electricity-generating capacity. Other attitudes are perhaps more problematic, though Plaid Cymru has come out strongly against nuclear power and in favour of developing new coal-burning techniques in order to safeguard jobs in the South Wales coalfield.

The Labour Party, which controls Gwent County Council, is divided on the issue; their councillors might decide to go for a public inquiry.

The successful campaign to prevent Wales Gas constructing liquified gas tanks at Hirwaun in Mid Glamorgan shows that to fight a public inquiry is not enough. When the findings of that inquiry went against the opponents, only the support of the local trades council and trades unionists, in picketting the site, prevented their construction.

The National Union of Mine-workers is among the few unions to feel threatened by the CEEB proposals; their Area Executive is opposing the renewal of planning permission through South Wales Energy 2000, which also has two trades council members in Gwent, Torfaen and Ebbw Vale.

A developing campaign to oppose the nuclear power station must gain the support of these and other organisations in the labour movement. Hirwaun has shown the way.

Public Inquiries.

Public Inquiries are supposed to be a safeguard for the man in the street against bureaucratic excesses that affect his interests. At least, this is the theory. In fact, they are often a facade - not to say a farce. They are a gloss on a process which prevents people from exercising any genuine democratic control over their lives. The example of what happened at Hirwaun - which is discussed elsewhere in this issue* is fairly typical, and the lessons to be learnt are clear enough: don't put too much reliance on this process to protect your interests.

Two other slightly different examples have come to our notice recently, one in Swansea and the other in Newport. At Swansea, a number of residents were objecting to a road planned to go through their homes to serve the new Quadrant shopping centre. A few days before the inquiry, they received eviction notices from the County Council who owned the property. This of course is a much more sensible way of dealing with objectors - the

results of an inquiry take up to a year to come out, but you can evict tenants within a month. Whatever happened, incidentally, to the Labour Party's pledge to give security of tenure to council tenants?

The case in Newport shows that councils do not expect to lose inquiries. When they do, they get very ratty indeed. When over a hundred houses were taken out of a demolition order by the Secretary of State, the Chief Executive John Long complained that the Council were now "stuck with houses that we bought and bricked-up for demolition." He added that he hoped other owners of property that had been saved after lodging objections would be able to afford to bring their properties up to standard. Instead of throwing a fit of pique, Mr. Long would have done much better to inquire how the Council could help these people improve their houses.

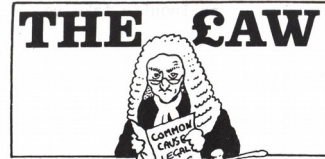
After all, they had only deteriorated after a decade of blight imposed by the Council. There are improvement grants for this purpose, as Mr. Long knows full well. That is what your job is supposed to be about, Mr. Long. And it is also worth remembering that it is what public inquiries are all about.

*see pages 8 & 9

Guess Who?

"to guarantee work on honourable conditions is to democratise the people by making the lot of the less efficient, less steady, less industrious man who is the first to lose his employment as pleasant as that of his more efficient, or steady, or industrious fellow who retains his employment..... The line between independence and dependence, between the efficient and the unemployable, has to be made clearer and broader..... those men who, through general defects, are unable to fill such a 'whole' place in industry must be recognised as "unemployable". They must become the acknowledged dependants of the State, removed from free industry and maintained adequately in public institutions, but with complete and permanent loss of all citizens' rights - including not only the franchise, but civil freedom and fatherhood. To those moreover, if any, who may be born personally efficient but in excess of the number for whom the country can provide, a clear choice will be offered: loss of independence by entering a public institution, emigration, or immediate starvation".

*FoE objection available from G.Bye, 159, Newport Rd. Cardiff.



A New Law

On 1st. December last year a new housing law came into force called the Housing (Homeless Persons) Act 1977. Under the Act, the Government has issued a Code of guidance, and this Code has the force of law. The main effect of the law is to transfer responsibility for homeless people from Social Services Departments of County Councils

to Housing Departments of District/Borough Councils. The law imposes new duties on the District/Borough Councils in relation to certain categories of people. In order to benefit from these new duties, a person must be:

- homeless;
- have a priority need;
- have not become homeless intentionally.

Legal Meanings

It is when we look at the LEGAL meanings of these requirements that we begin to see how limited this new law is.

* A person is homeless if s/he has no accommodation which s/he can LAWFULLY occupy. This will include a person who has accommodation but cannot get in without forcing an entry or without risk of being beaten or threatened with violence.

* A person has priority need if:

- s/he has one or more dependant children;
- s/he is homeless or threatened with homelessness because of an emergency - for example, fire or flood;
- s/he is a pensioner or has a householder which includes a pensioner. (Pensioners will include those approaching retirement age who are particularly frail or in poor health);
- if she is pregnant (any one who lives, or might reasonably be expected to live with her is included in the priority need);
- if there are special circumstances which make him/her particularly vulnerable to damage.

* A person is intentionally homeless if:

- s/he has DELIBERATELY done, or failed to do, something which has led to s/he ceasing to occupy accommodation.

However, the only acts or omissions which are relevant are the IMMEDIATE ones which lead to homelessness. For example, if someone gave up a flat to move in with relatives, and then the relatives decided that s/he must go, the voluntary giving up of the flat would not be relevant; it was reasonable for him/her to continue to occupy the accommodation s/he had. It is not reasonable to expect a woman being beaten by a man with whom she is living to continue to live with him. If the amenities provided in the accommodation, overcrowding, disrepair, lack of facilities, emotional stress - drive a person from his/her accommodation, again it is not reasonable for them to be expected to continue living there. s/he were aware of relevant facts. If a person does something in good faith, then his/her act or omission is not to be regarded as deliberate. For example, a tenant who left his or her house on receipt of a notice to quit from the landlord. If s/he did this unaware of their rights to remain in the property until a court has decided on the landlords claim, then the leaving of the accommodation is not to be regarded as deliberate.



Passing the Buck

There are going to be occasions when a homeless person will have lived in areas of different Councils. In order to stop difficult housing authorities arguing that a person is the responsibility of another authority, rules have been established to sort out who is responsible. If a homeless person with a priority need has a local connection with a particular area, then the responsibilities for that person rest with the District/Borough for that area, unless by returning to that area that person or a dependant will be at risk of domestic violence.

Local connection has a legal meaning, namely one of the following:

- present or past residence in the area through a persons free choice (residence through detention in a mental hospital or while serving in the Armed Forces, or whilst in prison do not count as free choice);
- employment in the area;
- family associations in the area
- special circumstances.

Notification

Housing Authorities MUST give decisions to homeless applications in writing as soon as possible. If they make decisions adverse to you, they must give their reasons. Thus, a Housing Authority must tell you:

- whether they accept you as being homeless or threatened with homelessness;
- whether they regard you as having become homeless intentionally;
- whether they have informed or propose to inform another Housing Authority about your case.

The New Duties

The new law imposes the following duties on Housing Authorities:

- for a person homeless but WITHOUT a priority need: give advice and assistance as they consider appropriate, which should include lists of accommodation agencies, hostels, lod-

gings, getting on the housing lists of Councils and housing associations.

- for a person homeless WITH a priority need: ensure accommodation is made available immediately, either by providing it itself, or getting others to provide it.

Permanent accommodation should be available as soon as possible - homeless people should not be made to spend a period in temporary accommodation as a matter of policy.

- homeless with a priority need but intentionally homeless: to ensure that temporary accommodation is made available immediately for such time as the Authority considers reasonable, and to give advice and assistance in her/his attempts to obtain/retain permanent accommodation.

Homelessness

It hardly needs to be pointed out that this law will not solve homelessness. For one thing, the Act does

nothing effective for young and middle-aged single people. For another, it gives local authorities quite wide discretion and, given the financial pressures which local authorities have been subjected to in recent years, it is unlikely that this discretion will be used to the benefit of the homeless.

Nothing will solve homelessness until local authorities stop bricking up houses and keeping them empty for years on end and until the Government makes sufficient money available for local authorities to build enough houses for all. It is not fine words set out in Acts of Parliament or White Papers that are needed. It is MONEY that is needed - and that means changing spending priorities. But in order to be able to choose spending priorities we need power - economic power. Those who have it at present dislike the sort of spending priorities we need to have and will not give up their power easily.

Merthyr Mystery Sale

A proposal to site a factory on reclaimed tips at Plymouth Fields between Troedyrhiw and Pentrebach has met with opposition from local residents and some Plaid councillors.

A hastily organised petition against Brecon Industrial Developments' proposal to build

a factory for an electronics firm which claims it would employ 300-500 workers, received 95% support. Several public meetings overwhelmingly rejected the proposal. But the council voted to continue negotiations with the developer. The Labour group supports the scheme and Plaid are divided.

Residents say there are plenty of alternative sites already scheduled for industry. Brecon Developments, who refuse to name their clients, maintain they are interested solely in Plymouth Fields.

The action committee which has been formed argue that private interests, motivated by an instinct for profit, are attempting to over-rule the interests of the community. They believe, correctly, that any development should take place on the community's terms. After a hundred years of dereliction, the loss of the new green belt between Troedyrhiw and Pentrebach is too high a price to pay for some mystery jobs that could be put elsewhere - at Brecon Developments' other scheme on the adjoining Dix's Field, for example.



The Valleys and Transport Action Committee (VATAC), formed at a public meeting called by Merthyr Trades Council, is fighting British Rail's slashing of eight trains a day between Merthyr and Cardiff.

This reduction means the closure

of Merthyr's rail depot and the redundancy of all its guards and drivers. It means that it is only a matter of time before the line closes altogether. It's not just railwaymen's and commuter's jobs that are threatened. The whole quality of life and viability of Valley communities is under attack. It is becoming more and more necessary to travel for jobs, for hospitals, for schools - as everything gets rationalised and centralised - yet there are fewer and fewer trains and buses. VATAC, which consists of representatives from the Trades Council, Labour Party, Communist Party, Plaid Cymru Rail Study Group, NUR, ASLEF, and

community groups, claim B.R. have not proved that the Merthyr line runs at a loss. They are also campaigning for the establishment of a Passenger Transport Authority for S.E. Wales with responsibility for developing an integrated public transport system for buses and trains that will meet local needs. VATAC is organising objections to the Mid Glamorgan Structure Plan, which proposes the existing Valley rail services should be cut short at Porth, Abercynon and Ystrad Mynach. The railway is the life blood of the Valleys. If you want to survive, get involved. Contact VATAC. c/o 12, Seward Street, Merthyr Tydfil.

The following article on the bread industry was written some time ago. Delays in the production of 'Common Cause' mean that it has been somewhat overtaken by events. But because the article anticipated events which have subsequently taken place so accurately, we feel it is still worth publishing.

Spillers, of Homepride and Wonderloaf fame, closed bread factories in Cardiff and Cwmbran during April, putting 489 out of work. They sold their Swansea bakery to Associated British Foods. More recently, Spillers made 37 cake workers at Memory Lane Cardiff redundant. Spillers retained this bakery because cakes are more profitable than bread - especially if the group does not also own a chain of supermarkets which serve as an outlet for their product.

Associated British Foods own Sunblest and Finefare supermarkets (as well as a lot of other things like Merrets and Ryvita) and in turn are part of George Weston Holdings. The giant ABF has just announced profits of £77.6 millions for 1977-78, which is just £2.7 millions short of the previous year's record figures. One of the reasons profits are £2.7m. less is that it has been a bad year for supermarkets, because we have all had much less to spend on food.

Fine Fare made "only" £9.5 million in 1977-78 compared with £12.5 millions the year before. Even this £9.5m. would probably have been much less, and Fine Fare may well have lost part of its 4 per cent of the market if Sunblest had not been sold cheaply to attract the customers. But this, combined with the effects of last year's bread strike, meant

that the bakery section returned a loss of £2 millions for 1977-78, compared with the £4 million profit the year before. ABF won't be too worried about this. Apart from having a nice tax-deductible loss to set against other profits, they have succeeded in preserving their share of the much more profitable supermarket trade. On top of this, financial analysts in the City are confident that the baking business will return to a £4m. profit this financial year.

To do this, ABF will have to squeeze their bakery staff as hard as they can. It is because of these business calculations, (concerned as they are only with group profits), that we have 'cotton wool' bread and bread queues when bakery workers are forced to fight back in order to protect their livelihoods, working conditions and pay.

BREAD N' BARTER

I SHOULD THINK EVERYONE WILL REMEMBER THE BAKER'S STRIKE, AND THE BREAD QUEUES LAST AUGUST AND SEPTEMBER, FOLLOWED BY THE WORK TO RULE JUST BEFORE XMAS. DESPITE THE MASSIVE PRESS AND T.V. COVERAGE AT THE TIME, YOU MAY STILL BE CONFUSED - AND QUITE UNDERSTANDABLY SO! - AS TO WHAT THE HELL IT WAS ALL ABOUT. I WILL ATTEMPT TO PUT THE RECORD STRAIGHT.

I'd only been at the bakery, as a cake worker, for about a month when I was told that we were to be called out on strike. All I knew was that it was something to do with the August Bank Holiday which had just passed, and that a number of my workmates, employed on the bread section, had been grumbling about what a poor pay packet they would get that week. This was nothing uncommon as we were on £28 p.w. basic at the time. Then I found out that the Federation of Bakers companies, Allied Bakeries, Rank-Hovis-McDougall (RHM) and Spillers French, were refusing to pay the bread workers for the one-day holiday. Their reason for this was that previously they had always forced workers to attend on Bank Holidays. Yet the unions have opposed holiday working since 1903, and even have a National Working Agreement to back this up. This year had been different though. The Union's Annual Conference had declared that there would be no Bank Holidays worked this year until the National Agreement had been changed, and



that every bakery worker would expect to be paid, as was the right of about 90% of British workers.

The strike itself started mainly in South Wales, at Mothers Pride (RHM) in Taffs Well, although we were joined by the bakery workers in Manchester, Merseyside and elsewhere, and were supported by our colleagues in Bristol.

Almost immediately, pickets were organised on the flour mills in the area, where we had very strong support from the tanker drivers and other workers. Only flour for retail selling and for hospital baking was released. The Bristol and other West Country members put embargoes on bread crossing the Severn Bridge, and others struck for a day or more. After 10 days on strike, without strike pay, and in many cases without Social Security, a National Strike was declared.

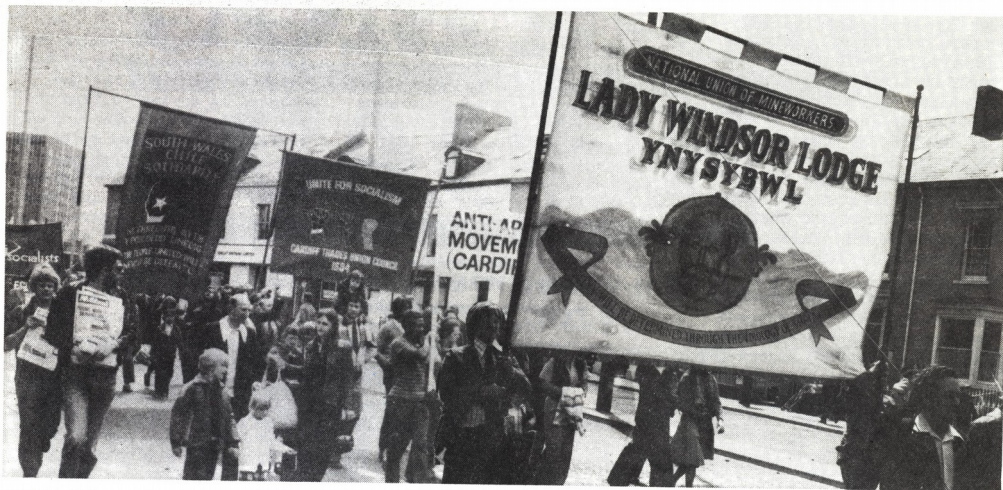
By the evening of 19th September the dispute had been resolved, not to the great satisfaction of the members, and we resumed work 2 days later. What did we gain? The opportunity, at the discretion of the management, to spend future Bank Holidays at home - provided, mind you, that the management were guaranteed enough labour to carry out production on that day. Had we stayed out, we could have won: the full right to spend holidays at home with our families, and a stronger position from which to launch our pay claim in November.

In November, the Federation of Bakers wage negotiations came up. Again, the employers sought confrontation, and while many other groups of workers were preparing an onslaught on the 10% limit, we were forced to go into a national work to rule and overtime ban just to get that 10% plus 3 extra days holiday to bring us up to 4 weeks annually. We finally settled, about 2-3 days before Christmas for 9½% and 1 extra day.

Rumours are percolating down from the top these days that one of the 'Big Three' - Spillers French, are planning to pull out of the baking industry in South Wales, having been squeezed out of the 'Super market Discount War' by Allied Bakeries and RHM.

continued p. 16

Network... Network... Network..



ABERCARN TRADES COUNCIL AND
LABOUR PARTY.
10, Fox Avenue, Pentwynmawr,
Newbridge, Gwent.

ABERGAVENNY TRADES COUNCIL.
12, Derwen Way, Abergavenny,
Gwent.

ABERTILLERY TRADES COUNCIL.
Dan-y-Bryn, Christchurch,
Aberbeeg, Gwent.

BARRY AND DISTRICT TRADES
COUNCIL.
11, Solent Road, Colbrook,
Barry, South Glamorgan.

BLACKWOOD TRADES COUNCIL.
56, Gordon Road, Blackwood,
Gwent.

BLAENAVON TRADES COUNCIL.
5, Greenfield Place, Blaenavon,
Gwent.

BRYNMAWR AND DISTRICT TRADES
COUNCIL.
58, Clydach Street, Brynmawr,
Gwent.

CARDIFF TRADES COUNCIL.
117, Aberporth Road, Gabalfa,
Cardiff, South Glamorgan.

CHEPSTOW TRADES COUNCIL.
20, Highfield, Caerwent,
Newport, Gwent.

CYNON VALLEY TRADES COUNCIL.
13, Neville Terrace, Gadlys,
Aberdare, Mid Glamorgan.

EBBW VALE TRADES COUNCIL.
5, Alder Grove, Rassau, Ebbw
Vale, Gwent.

LLANTRISANT AND LLANTWIT FARDRE
TRADES COUNCIL.
35, PenrhwiFer Road, Tonyrefail,
Porth, Rhondda.

LLIW VALLEY TRADES COUNCIL.
43, Hebron Road, Clydach,
Swansea, West Glamorgan.

MERTHYR TYDFIL TRADES COUNCIL
25, Llwyn Dic Penderyn, George-
town, Merthyr Tydfil.

MONMOUTH TRADES COUNCIL.
5, Chestnut Terrace, Wyeshaw,
Monmouth, Gwent.

MYNYDDISLWYN TRADES COUNCIL.
10, Mount Pleasant, Ynysddu,
Newport, Gwent.

NANTYGLO AND BLAINA TRADES COUN-
CIL.
34, Maeshafod, Blaina, gwent.

NEATH AND DISTRICT TRADES
COUNCIL.
48, Roman Way, Neath, West
Glamorgan.

NEWPORT TRADES COUNCIL.
67, Almond Drive, Newport,
Gwent.

PENARTH TRADES COUNCIL.
117, Plassey Street, Penarth,
South Glamorgan.

PONTARDULAIS AND DISTRICT
TRADES COUNCIL,
30, Carmarthen Road, Forest,
Pontardulais, West Glamorgan.

PONTYPRIDD TRADES COUNCIL.
3, Quarry Road, Maesycod,
Pontypridd, Mid Glamorgan.

PORT TALBOT TRADES COUNCIL.
67, Farm Drive, Sandfields,
Port Talbot, West Glamorgan.

RHONDDA TRADES COUNCIL.
2, Penmain Street, Mount Pleasant
Porth, Rhondda.

RHYMNEY VALLEY TRADES COUNCIL.
10, St. Davids Drive, Craig-y
-Rhacea, Machen, Gwent.

RISCA TRADES COUNCIL AND LABOUR
PARTY.
52, Dan-y-Graig Road, Risca,
Gwent.

SWANSEA AND DISTRICT TRADES
COUNCIL.

31, Heol-y-Grug, Morriston,
Swansea, west Glamorgan.

TORFAEN TRADES COUNCIL.,
32, Berkeley Crescent, Sebastopol
Pontypool, Gwent.

TREDEGAR TRADES COUNCIL.
Redlands, Church Street,
Tredegar, Gwent.

Guess Who?

ANSWER:

William Beveridge,
Father of the
Social Security System.

correction to last issue's

Network Page:

CARDIFF GYPSY SUPPORT GROUP -
3, Millbrook Road, Dinas Powis,
Cardiff.

Home Helps

The End of a Free Service...

THE TORIES ON SOUTH GLAMORGAN COUNTY COUNCIL ARE LIVING UP MAGNIFICENTLY TO THEIR PHILOSOPHY OF LIFE. THEIR RECENT MISERABLE DIRECTIVE THAT THE OLD AND INFIRM SHOULD IN FUTURE PAY FOR THE HOME HELP SERVICES IS TYPICAL OF THEIR TWIN PASSIONS: THEIR INSISTENCE THAT PEOPLE SHOULD LOOK AFTER THEMSELVES AND THEIR TOLERANCE OF THE WELFARE STATE PROVIDED ONLY THAT IT CAN BE MADE TO PAY.

The Tories' penny pinching has now reached such extreme lengths that they are attacking those least able to afford the charges and least able to resist it. Needless to say they are also those in greatest need. The people we are concerned about are not able to look after themselves, the only contact they have with the outside world in many cases is via home helps and meals on wheels workers. They have made their contribution to society and the Welfare State throughout their working lives. This is their reward.

What can be done
N.U.P.E. has informed all our members that they should not become involved in any administrative or clerical duties con-

nected with the collection of these undignified dues. Some of our members voluntarily informed their South Glamorgan branch officials that they would be too embarrassed to collect the charges anyway.

There are 550 home helps in the Cardiff area and about 150 in the Vale area; they service between 5500 and 6000 clients. They are employed under the National Joint Council (Manual Workers) Agreement for local authorities services and the collection of dues or any other administrative duty imposed upon them is questionable under the provisions of this agreement.

It is common knowledge that N.A.L.G.O. officers are querying the administrative costs of introducing such charges. Some charges are already being collected from people who have had the means to pay but the extra administrative burden in extending this to everyone could kill the exercise. The cuts in Local Government staffing levels will make it even more difficult.

Both N.U.P.E. and G. & M.W.U. are concerned that about 500 home helps are not union organised and that the authority has an unfair advantage in seeking to influence their thinking. The Council should have consulted both unions before writing to home helps seeking their participation in collecting money directly from clients but

they didn't. In addition the Council have refused to give names and addresses of home helps to the unions so the unions could put their side of the argument to them.

A letter to home helps from J.Gamble, the Director of Social Services, implies that the Council is trying to help the old and infirm. Collection of charges through home helps has the distinct advantage that:

"the client does not suffer any inconvenience and does not incur any additional expense in respect of postage and poundage on postal orders and can settle debts at the time of receiving the services.."

It all sounds so entirely reasonable. Which of course it is, if you are a Tory.

The Cardiff Trades Council is making representation to the County Council, and N.U.P.E. and the G. & M.W.U. are looking for a link up with the Labour Group in order to continue to prevent these charges from being successfully implemented. Also we would request all individuals seriously concerned to write to Local Councillors, M.P.'s and anybody with influence to stop these charges.

A. Carter
N.U.P.E. Area Officer
(Mid Glamorgan)

ISSUE No.2 PRODUCED BY - KEN BARKER, RICHARD BARTHOLOMEW, BARBARA CASTLE, MIKE FLEETWOOD, JEREMY GASS, STEVE GLASGOW, ROBERT JONES, KEITH MORGAN, PENNY PHILCOX, EVE REES, COLIN STEVENS, PHIL TAYLOR.
OUR THANKS TO - BOB DUMBLETON, TERESA JAMES, JON PLUMPTON.

BAKERY STRIKE (cont. from p.14)

This 'war' involves selling bread in bulk to supermarkets at a loss, in order to freeze out competition while supermarkets sell it as a Loss-leader to lure customers from other supermarkets. This undercutting, incidentally, is what was responsible for the proposed 2½-3p rise last November, and the more recently announced increase.

Allied Bakeries, of course, have little reason to worry; their parent company, George Weston Holdings, an international food giant with an annual surplus of £98 million, owns Fine Fare and Merretts, while R.H.M. own Hopkin Morgan and other retail chains. R.H.M. who control an immense chunk of the flour milling industry in Britain and who own Cerebos, also an international food group, made an annual surplus of £62 million. Even Spillers-French, who, as well as producing Homepride,

Wonderloaf, Lyons Cakes etc., command a large slice of the animal feed market in Britain and the flour-milling industry - in Britain, Canada and Africa made an annual surplus of £27 million.

And yet, all of these companies say that there is not enough profit to be made, and have been grumbling to the Government for some years, always threatening to pull out and leave mass redundancies and a bread shortage. The Government has already coughed up a large subsidy on the price of bread, but still the 'Big Three' are not satisfied. Spillers-French, in particular, have 'centralised' and 'rationalised' their baking concerns. This means, for instance, that where they have previously run bakeries in the valleys, often producing bread for the local taste, they have shut them, and 'centralised' to Cardiff for baking and distribution.

If they do 'centralise' out of South Wales altogether, perhaps to London, this would, of course, mean even higher unemployment in the area, and would decimate our 58,000 strong union. In addition, your loaf of bread, which is already badly tampered with, would be frozen, stockpiled and transported several hundred miles before it reached you, and eventually you could even be deprived of daily deliveries. Your choice of 'morning goods' and quality cakes would also be severely restricted. We as producers are not willing to let this happen, and we hope that you, as consumers, are not either. Please at least, remember next time you have to queue for your 'thin-sliced-cotton-wool-loaf' and you hear other people complain about 'greedy bakery workers', don't help the bosses to fight us, but fight with us! We're in this together.

Ian Robinson